

October 26, 2021

DRAFT

1 In attendance: Dwight Brew, Tom Gauthier, Chris Yates, Will Ludt, Jared Hardner (remote), and
2 Tim Kachmar.
3 Staff in attendance: Nic Strong – Community Development Director, and Kristan Patenaude –
4 Recording Secretary
5 Also in attendance: Steve Whitman, and Zak Brohinsky (remote), Resilience Planning & Design;
6 Sara Siskavich, NRPC (remote); and Ryan Friedman, NRPC (remote).
7

8 **1. Call to Order**

9 Dwight Brew called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.
10

11 **2. Review of baseline buildout analysis**

12 Ryan Friedman reviewed a poster and data for the baseline buildout analysis. He explained that
13 this baseline analysis considered a time constraint of 20 years. With this constraint, at a rate of
14 30 new housing units per year, the analysis shows a potential 600 new houses spread throughout
15 Town randomly. The full buildout analysis, with no time constraint, showed a theoretical 2,500
16 new homes and businesses in Town. It would take nearly 100 years to reach the full buildout
17 analysis, according to the current development rate in Town.
18

19 In response to a question from Jared Hardener, Ryan Friedman stated that this analysis does not
20 take road frontage into account but looks at other zoning ordinance criteria.
21

22 Ryan Friedman detailed the data of this analysis. He explained that the current population in
23 Town is 11,753. This buildout analysis shows a population in 2040 of 13,398. It also shows an
24 increase of housing units from 4,280 to 4,880, and an increase in commercial square footage
25 from 14.4m to 16.4m. The developed acreage in Town, based on the current trends, would
26 increase from 12,316 to 15,404 (approximately 78% of Town). The total student enrollment in
27 town, including Mont Vernon students, would increase from 2,251 to 2,566.
28

29 Chris Yates asked that the poster for the analysis make it clear that these numbers are based on
30 single-family homes. Ryan Friedman agreed and explained that increased densities, for example
31 from PRDs or multi-family units, would increase these numbers.
32

33 Dwight Brew asked if this analysis can be used to figure out what might happen on a particular
34 square footage in Town, such as on the sites of the proposed Carlson Manor, Clearview, or
35 Hazen development proposals. Ryan Friedman stated that this was not possible with this
36 analysis. That particular type of targeted analysis could be a second scenario created for this
37 project. Ryan Friedman explained that this tool does not use frontage data in its calculations.
38

39 Dwight Brew stated that this analysis appears to tell the public that approximately 600 new
40 houses will be built in Town over the next 20 years. However, the three proposed developments
41 that he mentioned look to possibly introduce 200 units to Town within the next several years. He
42 believes these two different datasets may make the public question the analysis.
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44 Sara Siskavich stated that the buildout is a modeling exercise using GIS, not survey data. GIS
45 gives a coarser level of detail than a survey plan. The buildout is meant to be an expression of
46 what is allowed under current zoning ordinances in Town. The simulation is used to distill down
47 to logical rules that are placed across the map. This analysis is for an audience similar to the
48 Committee, ones interested in planning or land use. It is not a public outreach tool. She stated
49 that NRPC is willing to participate in this process and come up with materials, but she cautioned
50 the Committee that it will be difficult to get this specific message across to an audience using
51 this tool. She stated that this analysis is not predictive and cannot be used to say what will
52 happen in the future.

53

54 Dwight Brew asked how NRPC came up with 30 houses per year to plug into the analysis. Ryan
55 Friedman stated that he received this number from Nic Strong. Nic Strong stated that she decided
56 on this number after looking at the number of building permits issued over the past number of
57 years, as found in the Town report.

58

59 Ryan Friedman stated that, if the group is sure that the three proposed housing developments
60 mentioned will move forward, he can include an additional 200 housing units into the formula,
61 and then an additional 30 units per year. Nic Strong noted that the group is unable to predict
62 when or if these developments will be built. The Planning Board has not yet discussed phasing or
63 the number of units to be built per year for any of these developments.

64

65 Tim Kachmar stated that he believes the buildout analysis presented this evening gives the Town
66 a “best case scenario.” It shows what could happen in the next 20 years based on current lots and
67 zoning, without any PRDs or duplex units included. He believes that 30 units per year seems
68 reasonable, especially when looking at current shortages in labor and supplies. This number
69 could be higher if different unit types are included.

70

71 Chris Yates suggested that the PRD variable could be included in this analysis by calculating an
72 additional 25% over the baseline density.

73

74 Will Ludt noted that this analysis still does not account for the three proposed large
75 developments previously mentioned. Chris Yates stated that only two of those proposed
76 developments have been approved, but no phasing plan has yet been seen by the Planning Board.

77

78 Dwight Brew stated that he is uncomfortable with the potential level of accuracy of this analysis.
79 He believed the analysis would include frontage and acreage into the calculation. He noted that,
80 while this analysis does not account for PRDs, PRDs are currently allowed in Town ordinances.

81

82 Chris Yates stated that he believes this is a simplified approach based on what the Town could
83 expect under a certain number of parameters. He believes this is a very conservative number.

84

85 Will Ludt expressed concern over the analysis not specifically calling out the few large,
86 proposed developments, as people will not be able to see what can be done to limit development
87 in Town.

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88

89 Tim Kachmar noted that if 25% above baseline density is calculated out to account for PRDs,
90 this would be approximately 150 extra units, or a total of approximately 750 units over 20 years.

91

92 Chris Yates noted that the software cannot determine new roads.

93

94 Dwight Brew stated his concern would be saying to the public that, over the next 20 years only
95 30 homes per year will be built. He believes many people may look at that and think that as long
96 as there are methods in place to limit growth to that rate that would be okay. Chris Yates noted
97 that the Committee will need to describe the particular parameters used and why this is not a
98 definite number.

99

100 Sara Siskavich stated that this analysis is only an expression of the current zoning ordinances.
101 Next, the Committee will need to determine what scenarios it wants to have examined as bases
102 for comparative analysis. These buildouts do not model potential realities but do illustrate the
103 pros and cons of developing properties around Town.

104

105 Chris Yates asked if the analysis tool would be able to show what a buildout would look like if
106 the Town changed its ordinances to increase wetland buffers. Ryan Friedman stated that this
107 would impact the analysis and give a different buildout scenario.

108

109 In response to a question from Dwight Brew, Ryan Friedman stated that, if the input to the
110 analysis was for 60 units per year instead of 30 units per year, the data given for each item, such
111 as population or school enrollment, would be doubled and the additional units would be
112 randomly placed on the map.

113

114 Ryan Friedman noted that another Town that NRPC is working with is looking at the impact of
115 senior housing on this type of buildout analysis.

116

117 Dwight Brew asked about showing a map and data based on the 30 units per year possibility and
118 one based on the 60 units per year possibility at the forum, in order to allow people to look at
119 comparisons. Ryan Friedman stated that NRPC usually never gets the public involved in these
120 buildout scenarios. He stated that, in his opinion, something of true value to the public would be
121 completing the two additional buildout scenarios in order to make comparisons.

122

123 Steve Whitman stated that the buildout analysis is a powerful tool. He believes if this map and
124 dataset are shown at the public forum, people will only look at it and never make it to the
125 stations. He suggested that the Committee give itself time to digest this information and wait
126 until the next public forum to display two or three of the different buildout scenarios, in order to
127 tell a better story to the public regarding how potential policy actions would change the scenario.

128

129 In response to a question from Dwight Brew, Steve Whitman stated that he would not even
130 display the data without the map at the public forum, as he is afraid people will take a deep dive
131 into it and take it out of context. Ryan Friedman agreed and stated that he left the parcel lines off

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132 the analysis map because people automatically look to see if something will potentially be built
133 next to their parcel.

134
135 Chris Yates agreed with waiting to show this information to the public.

136
137 Jared Hardner stated that, even if the map and data aren't shown at the public forum, he believes
138 the message needs to be conveyed to the public that growth can and will happen. The landscape
139 is not static, and the Master Plan will help plan for this growth. He would like the analysis to
140 eventually show comparisons for thresholds, such as the number of extra students that would
141 require more space in the schools, or the number of people that would require more police staff
142 and cruisers, etc.

143
144 Steve Whitman suggested that the Committee sit with this information, get initial feedback on
145 the other information to be presented at the public forum, and dive into the focus groups. The test
146 questions asked of these focus groups can help inform the additional scenarios.

147
148 Tim Kachmar suggested that people may want to hear the maximum number of houses built in
149 Town in any of the previous several years.

150
151 Steve Whitman stated that the message at the public forum will be that growth will happen and
152 have impacts, and this project is to direct those impacts. He explained that some of this
153 information from the buildout scenario can be included in his introduction at the forum, but he
154 would suggest not having hard copies of this for people to take.

155
156 Dwight Brew stated that people will want to know if nothing is done in Town, what will growth
157 look like, and what tools can help with this. He would like this to be discussed soon by the
158 Committee.

159
160 In response to a question from Sara Siskavich, Steve Whitman stated that the public forum will
161 include a formal discussion from Resilience explaining the Master Plan process and how people
162 can participate in it. There will then be stations located around the cafeteria, such as one for
163 transportation, which will have open ended questions, facts and figures, and ways for people to
164 give feedback.

165
166 Sara Siskavich asked what NRPC's best use of their time could be at the forum. Steve Whitman
167 suggested that NRPC not attend the forum, unless interested as a citizen. All feedback captured
168 during the forum and afterwards will be shared with NRPC.

169
170 Dwight Brew agreed with the method discussed for this public forum and stated that he would
171 like to soon start discussing potential tradeoffs and impacts.

172
173 Steve Whitman suggested that the Committee have a work session without NRPC to discuss the
174 other potential buildout scenarios.

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176 In response to a question from Chris Yates, Ryan Friedman stated that the software used for this
177 build out analysis is CommunityViz through ARC GIS.

178

179 **4. Existing Conditions Analysis:**

180 **- Update on Public Facilities Section**

181 Steve Whitman stated that Liz Kelly continues to work on this section. She is working with the
182 Town, Schools, Pennichuck Water, etc. There is no draft for the Committee to review at this
183 time. This section will be available for the Committee to review at its November meeting.

184

185 Will Ludt stated that he has looked through all of the existing conditions profiles and believes
186 that some things are missing, such as education/schools. He stated that, if the SAU's proposed
187 \$83M bond is passed by the Town, this will have an impact on the Town. He proposed adding a
188 section for education.

189

190 Steve Whitman noted that each existing conditions profile so far completed has been backed up
191 by data. The problem is that Resilience does not have that data for the schools. He noted that the
192 Master Plan is a land use focused document.

193

194 Will Ludt stated that the Master Plan is a Town-wide document, and he would like to spend time
195 discussing education and enrollment. He noted that one of the existing conditions documents
196 mentions that enrollment is going down or staying stagnant, but enrollment in Town is actually
197 going up. He noted that other profiles he would like to see included are Governance and
198 Communication.

199

200 Steve Whitman suggested that there can be focus groups on these topics to have informed
201 discussion, but that he does not want to confuse the document by adding these in.

202

203 Tom Gauthier stated that the SAU's Joint Facility Advisory Committee (JFAC) is holding its
204 own public forums, including one upcoming on November 8, 2021.

205

206 In response to a question from Dwight Brew, Will Ludt stated that he would like the education
207 profile he is proposing to not only discuss school facilities but also curriculum. Will Ludt
208 explained that one of the main reasons people come to Amherst is for its schools. Dwight Brew
209 stated that he believes it would take a long time to create this type of profile.

210

211 In response to a question from Dwight Brew, Steve Whitman stated that he has never included an
212 education section in any other Master Plan he's worked on. Steve Whitman stated that he may
213 include information about school facilities, but not beyond that.

214

215 Dwight Brew stated that he believes the JFAC is doing what it can to inform people, and that this
216 does not necessarily need to fall under the Master Plan update.

217

218 Will Ludt noted that, in regard to a possible governance profile, the Town recently shifted from
219 having an appointed to an elected Planning Board. He stated that there may be additional boards

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220 or commissions needed, or commissions that need to be consolidated. With regard to
221 communications, Will Ludt asked how the Town disseminates information and wondered if the
222 Town needed a Town newsletter, or an enhanced Town website. He would like to know how
223 people in Town get information about the Town.
224

225 Dwight Brew explained that, while the Master Plan name sounds overarching, it is really only a
226 land use tool. He believes it would be overstepping boundaries for the Master Plan to suggest the
227 number of boards the Town should have, or how they are laid out.
228

229 Will Ludt stated that, if a new school is built in Town, there will be an influx of people, which
230 could impact a 20 year build out scenario.
231

232 Tim Kachmar stated that there has been a lot of Town feedback received during this process.
233 While this may not fit directly into the Master Plan, it may still be good to have a focus group on
234 some of these issues while the public is interested.
235

236 In response to a question from Dwight Brew regarding it being incorrect for a Master Plan to
237 touch on communication or governance, Steve Whitman stated that it is not wrong, per se, but he
238 has never experienced it before. He suggested that there could be a question at the forum as to
239 how well people are being served by the Town and how they are communicated with by the
240 Town. This could be left very open-ended.
241

242 Chris Yates stated that he believes feedback is a good idea. However, he believes having a focus
243 group on schools could be a bad idea. He believes the School Boards are taking care of this on
244 their own. Tom Gauthier agreed that this is a function of the School Boards and JFAC.
245

4. Update on Outreach and Engagement:

- Forum Flyer and circulation promoting event

248 Steve Whitman asked that the Committee get out the word about the public forum on November
249 15, 2021, at 6:30 PM, at the Amherst Middle School. He stated that he is currently working with
250 Nic Strong and Natasha Kypfer to film an overview of the presentation that will be made at the
251 forum for online engagement.
252

- Public Forum draft materials

254 Jared Hardner reviewed a number of changes that he would like to see to the draft materials.
255

256 *Jared Hardner exited the meeting.*
257

258 In response to a question from Will Ludt, Steve Whitman stated that he has not spoken to any
259 members of the Historic District Commission but is working with Will Ludt on the Heritage
260 profile.
261

- Maps for Forum

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263 Zak Brohinsky showed the Committee a list of the maps he is proposing to display at the forum
264 including, an aerial map with roads, existing land use, conserved lands, unfragmented blocks of
265 land, Wildlife Action Plan priority habitat, surface waters, aquifers and development, properties
266 that support recreation, Recreation Department facilities, trail networks with trail system areas.
267 This will equate to 5 maps throughout the 7-8 stations.
268

269 Will Ludt asked about a map with Amherst's historical resources on it. Steve Whitman stated that
270 this is typically a land use focused document, but heritage and cultural sites can contribute to a
271 person's quality of life in Town. Will Ludt stated that he would work on a draft of this map.
272

273 Dwight Brew noted that the recreation maps may take some liberties, because the Town does not
274 own any playing fields or indoor recreational facilities, but many of these located in Town are
275 used by the Recreation Department. Steve Whitman stated that participants generally do not care
276 who owns the land, but they do like to see where items are located and who can access them.
277

278 Nic Strong suggested having a map for Town facilities. Steve Whitman stated that his concern is
279 that this may leave some people unsatisfied as there will be no additional information on it.
280

281 Steve Whitman stated that he is suggesting four focus groups that will have informed people on
282 each topic to sit and have a discussion that can be documented for future planning purposes.
283 These focus groups are housing, economic development, municipal facilities, and
284 conservation/resource protection. There are two user groups that will be reached out to
285 separately, youth and seniors. He believes these focus groups could be started after the holidays,
286 possibly in January.
287

288 Dwight Brew stated that he struggles with including a focus group for municipal facilities
289 because, if not considering the schools, there have only been minor expansions to the DPW and
290 Police Station facilities but otherwise there are not many other facilities in Town and there are no
291 plans to build more, other than the proposed Recreation Center from the Recreation Department.
292

293 Tim Kachmar noted that there may be changes to Town services, depending on the buildout
294 analysis results. He asked if it would make sense to plan for the growth of Town Departments
295 due to increased population.
296

297 Chris Yates suggested that this focus group could be for municipal facilities and services. He
298 believes there could be discussion regarding recreation facilities, sports courts, the Transfer
299 Station, and future growth.
300

301 In response to a question from Dwight Brew, Steve Whitman stated that he would plan to reach
302 out to youths and seniors in January as well. He stated that he would normally find a group of
303 approximately 15 to 20 children interested in discussing some of these topics. It usually works
304 best for him to go in and be part of classes during school hours.
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306 Bill Stoughton, 11 Pine Top Road, asked if the Committee will be seeking input on reduced use
307 of energy resources or more efficient use of these resources in Town. He suggested the
308 Committee could consider policy changes requiring solar power or increased insulation standards
309 for new developments. He explained that some members of the Conservation Commission would
310 like to drive home these points at the public forum.

311
312 In response to a question from Dwight Brew, Bill Stoughton stated he believes that the Town
313 may have latitude to enact ordinances requiring developments to be built to more stringent
314 requirements than the national building codes.

315
316 Dwight Brew asked if this item would be considered as a proposal for increased bonus density to
317 developers. Bill Stoughton stated that, while he was not considering that, the Committee may
318 want to discuss if the Town wants to be proactive in requiring or encouraging this type of
319 ordinance. Bill Stoughton noted that it could be a question for Town facilities also, in that
320 placing solar panels on a facility may reduce how much is spent on electricity.

321
322 Steve Whitman stated that he would be interested in the Committee agreeing to have a focus
323 group for energy and sustainability.

324

325 **5. Approval of Minutes August 24, 2021, & September 28, 2021**

326

327 **Will Ludt moved to approve the meeting minutes of August 24, 2021, as presented.**

328 **Tim Kachmar seconded.**

329 **Voting: Dwight Brew - aye, Chris Yates - aye, Will Ludt - aye, Tim Kachmar – aye,**
330 **and Tom Gauthier - aye; motion carried unanimously.**

331

332 **Tim Kachmar moved to approve the meeting minutes of September 28, 2021, as**
333 **presented. Will Ludt seconded.**

334 **Voting: Dwight Brew - aye, Chris Yates - aye, Will Ludt - aye, Tim Kachmar – aye,**
335 **and Tom Gauthier - abstain; 4-0-1 motion carried.**

336

337 **5. Old/New Business – none.**

338

339 **Chris Yates moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30pm. Tom Gauthier seconded.**

340 **Voting: Dwight Brew - aye, Chris Yates - aye, Will Ludt - aye, Tim Kachmar – aye,**
341 **and Tom Gauthier - aye; motion carried unanimously.**

342

343

344

345 *Respectfully submitted,*

346 *Kristan Patenaude*

347

348 Minutes approved: (enter date of meeting at which approved and then go to header, change

349 DRAFT to APPROVED and include approved date in the footer.